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Finance Committee Minutes 12-09-2002

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

7:30 PM O'NEILL ROOM COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDING

12/9/02

ATTENDEES:

Janowitz*	Feinleib	O'Riordan*	O'Neill*	Mahoney
DeCoursey*	Connors*	Simmons*	Morrisette*	
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst	Ronan	
Piandes*	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*	Tosi*	Kneeland

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Paul Bayer, Gordon Jamieson, Minuteman Tech School Committee member Erin Phelps

GENERAL: The chairman, Al Tosti, provided Finance Committee Handbooks on compact disk. He also circulated the telephone list for correction. New members Alan Jones and Steve O'Riordan were welcomed.

BUDGET SCHEDULE: Tosti stated that meetings were being held between the manager and her staff and the superintendent and her staff. Preparation of both worst-case (no revenue increase) and status-quo budgets are being considered. Both leaders have requested that the budget release be delayed a month to give them time to meet with their elected boards. Several members said that the delay is not justified, since the budget situation has not changed for several months. The chair pointed out that the new governor has until March to submit his budget and that the town manager had been in place only a few weeks.

VOTED that the budget release be scheduled for 2/1/03 and that it include a 2-year projection. 13-2.

VOTED that a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee be held during the first two weeks of January to discuss budget policy. Unanimous.

MINUTEMAN: Phelps reviewed recent policy decisions affecting vo-tech schools and requested the Finance Committee to support an out-of-district tuition that is 1.5 times the per capita foundation budget. She also requested support for paying the assessment based on the region agreement rather than the less expensive education-reform formula. This would increase Arlington's influence on the School Committee as we were perceived as team players. She suggested the difference be included in any override.

VOTED that the chair send a letter to the Department of Education advocating a \$12,500 annual tuition for out-of-district students. Unanimous.

IDEAS TO BALANCE THE BUDGET:

- Sell town-owned properties: (Consider Mt. Gilboa, Rider St., Crosby School, Gibbs School, Parmenter School, Dallin Library, Fox Library, Park Circle Fire Station, Great Meadows) O'Riordan to obtain town-owned land inventory
- Charge market rate rents in schools for after school programs: Fanning to investigate
- Sell properties used for town purposes and leaseback. Put proceeds into an endowment fund.

- Increase rents: Howard to circulate Planning Department spreadsheet.
- Name fields for a price
- Sell advertising at fields: Olsen to investigate
- Reduce pay raises (no contracts go beyond 6/30/03): Chair to invite the town counsel to advise on limits imposed by collective bargaining
- Include pensions and health insurance costs in department budgets
- Increase health insurance co-payment
- Consolidate finance functions (Treasurer, Purchasing, Postage, Parking, Assessor, Comptroller)
- Consolidate parking meter functions to avoid overtime
- Increase parking fees: Morrisette to investigate
- Create a "parking czar"
- Institute "resident permit only" parking zones
- Increase traffic-law enforcement: Jones to investigate.
- Charge for trash pickup
- Apply summer minimum fire-staffing levels all year: O'Neill to investigate
- Eliminate or outsource rescue service

RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$300,000

Peter B. Howard, secretary